



Meeting Agenda

Social Justice & Equity Commission

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Contact: Margo Morales
(360)753-8150

Monday, May 18, 2026

6:00 PM

Room 112, City Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.A ROLL CALL

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3.A** [26-0367](#) Approval of the April 20, 2026 Social Justice and Equity Commission Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

During this portion of the meeting, community members may address the Advisory Committee or Commission regarding items related to City business, including items on the Agenda. In order for the Committee or Commission to comply with Public Disclosure Law for political campaigns, speakers will not be permitted to make public comments before the Committee or Commission where the speaker promotes or opposes a candidate for public office or a ballot measure.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

- 6.A** [26-0365](#) Discussion of Recommendations Related to City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies

- 6.B** [26-0366](#) Approval of Draft Comment Letter on Recommendations for City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies

Attachments: [Draft Comment Letter on Recommendations for City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies](#)

7. REPORTS

8. OTHER TOPICS

9. ADJOURNMENT

Upcoming

Accommodations

The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in employment and the delivery of services and resources. If you require accommodation for your attendance at the City Advisory Committee meeting, please contact the Advisory Committee staff liaison (contact number in the upper right corner of the agenda) at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. For hearing impaired, please contact us by dialing the Washington State Relay Service at 7-1-1 or 1.800.833.6384.



City Hall
601 4th Avenue E.
Olympia, WA 98501
360-753-8244

Social Justice & Equity Commission
**Approval of the April 20, 2026 Social Justice
and Equity Commission Meeting Minutes**

Agenda Date: 5/18/2026
Agenda Item Number: 3.A
File Number:26-0367

Type: minutes **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

Title

Approval of the April 20, 2026 Social Justice and Equity Commission Meeting Minutes



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Social Justice & Equity Commission

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Contact: Margo Morales
(360)753-8150

Monday, April 20, 2026

6:00 PM

Room 112, City Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Robin Rosen-Evans called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Chair Robin Rosen-Evans, Vice Chair Marianne Ozmun-Wells, Commissioner Kevin Mattison, Commissioner Fauziya Mohamedali, Commissioner Ceasar Plasencia, Commissioner Jeremy Ruse and Commissioner Kieran Stilson

Excused: 1 - Commissioner Karin Arnold

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Dr. Amna Qazi

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes were approved.

3.A [26-0292](#) Approval of February 9, 2026 Social Justice and Equity Commission Meeting Minutes

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Staff shared a reminder about the upcoming Thurston Forward DEIB Summit on May 1-2, 2026 for anyone interested in attending.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

6.A [26-0291](#) Discussion of Recommendations Related to City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies

Staff presented about an evaluation of the City's Advisory Bodies and draft recommendations for improvements and enhancements to the City's community engagement. Commissioners discussed the draft recommendations with staff.

The discussion was discussed and closed.

7. **REPORTS - None**

8. **OTHER TOPICS**

Staff shared a reminder that next month's meeting will be Monday May 18, 2026.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Upcoming

Accommodations



Social Justice & Equity Commission

Discussion of Recommendations Related to City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies

Agenda Date: 5/18/2026
Agenda Item Number: 6.A
File Number:26-0365

Type: discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

Title

Discussion of Recommendations Related to City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies

Recommended Action

Discuss recommendations related to City Council appointed advisory bodies.

Report

Issue:

Whether to discuss recommendations related to City Council appointed advisory bodies.

Staff Contact:

Margo Morales, Community Engagement Program Specialist, Organizational Development and Performance, 360.753.8150

Presenter(s):

Margo Morales, Community Engagement Program Specialist

Background and Analysis:

The City is committed to meaningful and inclusive engagement. Council Appointed Advisory Bodies are a key component of this effort, providing community perspectives to support City Council in formulating public policy and making decisions on specific programs. The City of Olympia currently has 14 standing bodies with nearly 100 volunteers.

Over time, engagement strategies have adapted based on experience and the development of more sophisticated tools and techniques. A comprehensive evaluation of Council-Appointed bodies hasn't been performed, so in 2025 staff undertook an evaluation an analysis to learn if there are opportunities to enhance their effectiveness.

On May 14, 2025, the Community Livability and Public Safety Committee (CLPS) discussed the findings of an analysis on Council Appointed Advisory Bodies. The purpose of the analysis was to assess the effectiveness of how well Council Appointed Bodies are serving the Council, Staff, and volunteer members. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee directed staff to recommend strategies to improve the effectiveness of council appointed bodies and outlined the following four goals:

1. Community members provide meaningful input to guide policy and decision-making
2. Ensure equitable and inclusive engagement
3. The experience of community members is impactful
4. Resources to support advisory bodies are sustainable

In September 2025, the City contracted with Genevieve Canceko Chan to complete a comprehensive review of the City's current public engagement and advisory body systems and to identify opportunities to improve. Genevieve built upon the work previously presented to CLPS, supplementing it with additional stakeholder meetings, and further identifying systemic issues, barriers to participation, and common challenges for both staff and community participants. She also contacted other cities that had recently, or were currently, engaged in similar evaluations of their advisory bodies. She also met with council appointed advisory body staff liaisons to share and receive feedback on draft recommendations.

On February 25, 2026 staff updated CLPS which included sharing recommendations focused on two general themes: improvements to the current system focused on administrative process improvements, and a scenario that introduces additional engagement opportunities and multidisciplinary approach to some of the Advisory Bodies. At the conclusion of the briefing, CLPS directed staff to further explore these recommendations.

At the April 20, 2026 meeting of the Social Justice and Equity Commission staff briefed the commissioners on the evaluation of City Advisory Bodies and community engagement strategies and shared draft recommendations for opportunities to improve. Commissioners discussed the draft recommendations and shared initial feedback with staff.

The purpose of this agenda item is for the SJEC to further discuss the draft recommendations and to provide additional feedback, with particular attention to how they impact equitable and inclusive engagement. The Commission's feedback will inform the final draft recommendation which will be presented to CLPS on May 27, 2026.

Climate Analysis:

This discussion is not expected to have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Equity Analysis:

Public engagement that is equitable and inclusive of diverse community member perspectives is foundational to building trust in government, formulating effective policies, and developing programs that best meet community needs and priorities. The assessment of the current advisory body system is intended to identify barriers to participation and explore additional engagement strategies to allow for more diverse perspectives to be represented in Council and staff decision-making.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The Olympia community has a high interest in participating in local government decision making. Advisory bodies have historically provided opportunities for more direct Council engagement with the community around policy decisions and Council decision-making. Over the last several years, however, staff and Council have explored and experienced success in using a variety of other ways in which to engage community members, broadening the voices and perspectives represented in planning efforts and community conversations.

Options:

Discussion only.

Financial Impact:

There is no cost associated with the action. To reduce barriers to community member participation, the City offers stipends of \$25 per advisory body meeting attended to eligible members. Those members who certify as low income are eligible to receive stipends of \$50 per meeting attended. Advisory body members may waive the stipend. In 2025, the total cost of stipends was \$11,425.

Attachments:

None



Social Justice & Equity Commission
**Approval of Draft Comment Letter on
Recommendations for City Council Appointed
Advisory Bodies**

Agenda Date: 5/18/2026
Agenda Item Number: 6.B
File Number:26-0366

Type: decision **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

Title

Approval of Draft Comment Letter on Recommendations for City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies

Recommended Action

Approve draft comment letter on recommendations for City Council appointed advisory bodies.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a comment letter on recommendations for City Council appointed advisory bodies.

Staff Contact:

Margo Morales, Community Engagement Program Specialist, Organizational Development and Performance, 360.753.8150

Presenter(s):

Margo Morales, Community Engagement Program Specialist

Background and Analysis:

The City is committed to meaningful and inclusive engagement. Council Appointed Advisory Bodies are a key component of this effort, providing community perspectives to support City Council in formulating public policy and making decisions on specific programs. The City of Olympia currently has 14 standing bodies with nearly 100 volunteers.

Over time, engagement strategies have adapted based on experience and the development of more sophisticated tools and techniques. A comprehensive evaluation of Council-Appointed bodies hasn't been performed, so in 2025 staff undertook an evaluation an analysis to learn if there are opportunities to enhance their effectiveness.

At the Social Justice and Equity Commission's (SJEC) April 20, 2026 meeting, commissioners received a briefing on the evaluation process, what was learned, and draft recommendations for enhancements to the City's community engagement and Council Appointed Advisory Bodies. Commissioners discussed the draft recommendations with particular attention to how they might

impact equitable and inclusive engagement. Additional time for further discussion of the draft recommendations is scheduled for the SJEC May 18, 2026 meeting.

The purpose of this agenda item is for the Social Justice and Equity Commission (SJEC) to approve a comment letter summarizing their discussions and feedback on the draft recommendations for community engagement and Council Appointed Advisory Bodies. This letter will be submitted to the Community Livability and Public Safety Council Committee along with the recommendations on May 27, 2026.

Climate Analysis:

This is not expected to have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Equity Analysis:

Public engagement that is equitable and inclusive of diverse community member perspectives is foundational to building trust in government, formulating effective policies, and developing programs that best meet community needs and priorities. The assessment of the current advisory body system is intended to identify barriers to participation and explore additional engagement strategies to allow for more diverse perspectives to be represented in Council and staff decision-making.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The Olympia community has a high interest in participating in local government decision making. Advisory bodies have historically provided opportunities for more direct Council engagement with the community around policy decisions and Council decision-making. Over the last several years, however, staff and Council have explored and experienced success in using a variety of other ways in which to engage community members, broadening the voices and perspectives represented in planning efforts and community conversations.

Options:

- 1) Approve the draft letter
- 2) Make amendments to the draft letter and approve the amended draft.
- 3) Do not approve the draft letter. This would mean SJEC feedback is not directly included in the information provided to Community Livability and Public Safety on this project.

Financial Impact:

There is no cost associated with the action. To reduce barriers to community member participation, the City offers stipends of \$25 per advisory body meeting attended to eligible members. Those members who certify as low income are eligible to receive stipends of \$50 per meeting attended. Advisory body members may waive the stipend. In 2025, the total cost of stipends was \$11,425.

Attachments:

Draft Comment Letter on Recommendations for City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies



To: Community Livability and Public Safety Council Committee

May 18, 2026

Honorable Chair Madrone and Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Members,

In 2025 the Council directed City staff to do an assessment of the Council Appointed Advisory Body system, and community engagement strategies. At their April 20, 2026 meeting the Social Justice and Equity Commission received a briefing on the assessment of City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies and draft recommendations on opportunities to further support meaningful and inclusive community engagement. Commissioners continued their discussion of the draft recommendations at their May 18, 2026 meeting. This letter is intended to share with you the Commission's discussions regarding these recommendations.

The Commission's discussion centered around the following topics:

- Supportive of shift in recruitment timelines and rolling recruitment to ensure vacancies are efficiently filled and new members are engaged in the work plan development process.
- Additional engagement tools like community academy, community connectors and community collaborators are positive steps in reducing existing barriers to participation for community members. Acknowledged that these will not reduce all barriers but are an improvement on the current system.
- Concerns that community members most impacted by issues might still not have capacity or sense of safety to be able to directly participate.
- Utilizing ad hoc committees and short-term collaborator groups could increase the City's ability to be flexible and nimble in engagement on issues that are emergent.
- Community Academies could be an effective way to build trust, create environments where it is ok to ask questions, and do hands-on learning about City government.
- Consider partnering with schools on Community Academies to provide students with some kind of credit or academic benefit to participation for added value and to encourage youth involvement.
- Consider partnering with local businesses or organizations to bring Community Academy sessions or Community Conversations to the community rather than asking community members to come to City Hall.
- Ensuring that the work of community engagement is not performative. Improve feedback loop and demonstration of how community engagement and feedback have been impactful in policy development and decision making.
- Multidisciplinary approach to problem-solving makes sense and could more effectively collect diverse perspectives on issues, as opposed to groups where everyone is like-minded.

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- Staff time would still be required to engage with connectors and collaborators. Potential reduction in advisory bodies could allow staff to shift their time from support of advisory bodies to supporting other engagement tools.
- Consideration around what incentives community members have to participate in the variety of recommended engagement tools. How do these tools add value for participating community members, not just staff and council receiving community input?
- Consider evaluation of the stipend system and how to provide meaningful compensation for community connectors or collaborators. Ensure that the process to receive stipends is not overly burdensome and prohibitive for participants.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft recommendations for Council Appointed Advisory Bodies and community engagement and provide community perspectives on how the recommendations could support community engagement around policy development and decision-making.

Best Regards,

Robin Rosen-Evans, Chair
Social Justice & Equity Commission

RR:mm